

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 12412 161456Z
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SNM-02 INRE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SY-05 SS-15 SSO-00
ARAE-00 /044 W

----- 028653 /23 45

O P 161400Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8880
DEA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY

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PANAMA FOR RSS

CARACAS FOR DEA

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ASEC, SNAR
SUBJECT: TIME MAGAZINE ARTICLE TO CRITIZE DEA
OFFICE SECURITY

LOCAL TIME MAGAZINE STRINGER INFORMED US YESTERDAY
EVENING THAT MAGAZINE WILL BE CARRYING ARTICLE ON
SHOOTING OF DEA SAIC GGNZALEZ IN FORTHCOMING ISSUE.
STRINGER, WHO IS FILING THE STORY FROM HERE FOR THE
MAGAZINE, INDICATED HE WOULD INCLUDE SPECULATION ON
VARIOUS POSSIBLE MOTIVES BEHIND KILLING OF GONZALEZ
BUT THAT A MAJOR THRUST OF ARTICLE WILL BE WHAT
HE REGARDS AS SHOCKINGLY LAX PHYSICAL SECURITY MEASURES
AT DEA OFFICE HERE. STRINGER PLANS TO DESCRIBE EASE
WITH WHICH HE HIMSELF GAINED ACCESS TO OFFICE IN THE PAST AND
ALSO TO REPORT THAT ON OCCASION HE OBSERVED THE SECURITY DOOR WAS
AJAR OR ITS ELECTRONIC LOCK NOT FUNCTIONING.
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2. DCM MET WITH STRINGER AND, IN EFFORT TO IMPART
BALANCE TO THE TIME ARTICLE, DCM MADE THE FOLLOWING
POINTS WHICH ADDRESSEES MAY FIND USEFUL IN RESPONDING
TO FURTHER, LIKELY QUERIES:

A. IT IS TRUE THAT SECURITY MEASURES AT THE DEA OFFICE ARE DIFFERENT FROM THOSE AT THE CHANCERY. LATTER IS SEPARATE USG DESIGNED AND OWNED BUILDING ON LARGE PLOT OF GROUND. IT HAS SEVERAL "LINES OF DEFENSE" AGAINST A SECURITY THREAT, BEGINNING WITH A PERIMETER STEEL FENCE PATROLLED BY ARMED EMBASSY GUARDS AND POLICE. IT IS CLEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO FULLY DUPLICATE SUCH MEASURES AND DEFENSES IN THE DEA OFFICE, WHICH CONSIST OF RELATIVELY SMALL RENTED AREA IN A COMMERCIAL OFFICE BUILDING THREE BLOCKS FROM CHANCERY.

B. THE PHYSICAL SECURITY MEASURES IN PLACE AT THE DEA OFFICE WERE PLANNED AND MAINTAINED UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF SAIC GONZALEZ. IN COLLABORATION WITH SECURITY EXPERTS. AS AN EXPERIENCED LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER THOROUGHLY FAMILIAR WITH THE SECURITY SITUATION IN COLOMBIA, MR. GONZALEZ WAS FULLY CAPABLE OF MAKING THE DIFFICULT DECISIONS ENTAILED IN SUCH MATTERS. THESE DECISIONS INVOLVE TRADE-OFFS BETWEEN SECURITY REQUIREMENTS AND THE OPERATIONAL NECESSITIES OF THE OFFICE.

C. IT IS OF COURSE POSSIBLE TO ENVISAGE ADDITIONAL SECURITY MEASURES THAT COULD HAVE OR MIGHT BE UNDERTAKEN BUT IT SHOULD ALSO BE KEPT IN MIND THAT AN ABSOLUTE, PERFECT SECURITY IS UNATTAINABLE. MOREOVER, EVEN IF ONE HAD BEEN ABLE TO APPROACH FORTRESS-LIKE CONDITIONS IN THE OFFICE, THIS WOULD STILL HAVE LEFT THE THREATS AND RISKS THAT MR. GONZALEZ AND HIS COLLEAGUES FACED OUTSIDE THE PROTECTION OF THE OFFICE IN THEIR INESCAPABLY DANGEROUS PROFESSION.
SANCHEZ

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, PHYSICAL SECURITY, MURDER, DRUG CONTROL, REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BOGOTA12412
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760463-0295
From: BOGOTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761234/aaaabdnl.tel
Line Count: 89
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 JUL 2004 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <27 OCT 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TIME MAGAZINE ARTICLE TO CRITIZE DEA OFFICE SECURITY LOCAL TIME MAGAZINE STRINGER INFORMED US YESTERDAY
TAGS: ASEC, SNAR, US, CO, (GONZALEZ, OCTAVIO), (COLE, THOMAS CHARLES)
To: STATE DEA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006